

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
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R 261050Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4095
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
USLO PEKING

C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 2629

DEPT PASS CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, BM, UR, CH

1. IN A CONVERSATION AT HIS INITIATIVE WITH USSR CHARGE JILIAEV
SEVERAL POINTS OF INTEREST WERE RAISED:

A. USSR VIEW OF BURMA:

JILIAEV STATED HIS GOVERNMENT CONSIDERED BURMESE SOCIALISM
TO BE A FARCE WITH LITTLE PROSPECT OF EVER ADVANCING ECONOMICALLY
UNDER ITS PRESENT LEADERSHIP. HE WAS CONVINCED THAT SOCIALISM COULD
WORK IN BURMA, ALTHOUGH HE WAS SHORT ON SPECIFICS, AND COMPARED
THE LOCAL SITUATION TO THE PROBLEMS FACED IN THE USSR IN 1917.
HE DID AGREE, HOWEVER, THAT BURMA'S HUMAN RESOURCES AND PROLETARIAN
LEADERSHIP DID LIMIT IMMEDIATE PROSPECTS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIALISM.

B. USSR INTERESTS IN BURMA:

IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTION AS TO SOVIET INTERESTS IN
BURMA HE RECITED THE USUAL LITANY OF PEACE, INDEPENDENCE AND
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SOCIAL ADVANCEMENT. BY IMPLICATION, THE STRESS WAS PUT ON IN-
DEPENDENCE AND THUS ON BURMA/PRC RELATIONS.

C. USSR/BURMA RELATIONS:

OF GREATEST INTEREST WAS JILIAEV'S STATEMENT THAT THE
GUB WAS BECOMING INCREASINGLY FRUSTRATED WITH THE PRC AND
WAS NOW TURNING TO MOSCOW. HE SAID THAT NOTHING OF GREAT CON-
SEQUENCE HAD YET EVENTUATED BUT THAT THE BURMESE "ARE DOING

SOME NICE THINGS FOR US." HE CITED PERSONAL CONTACTS AND EXCHANGES OF DELEGATIONS. HE RESPONDED WITH A DEFINITE AFFIRMATIVE TO MY QUESTION WOULD THE USSR PROVIDE ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO THE GUB, ADDING THAT THE ONLY REQUIREMENT FOR ASSISTANCE WAS A GUB REQUEST. (COMMENT: BURMESE ARE CULTURALLY CONDITIONED AGAINST BLUNT REQUESTS. USUALLY THE BEST THEY CAN DO IS HINT WHAT MIGHT BE ACCEPTED IF OFFERED.) JILIAEV THEN EXPRESSED HIS BEWILDERMENT THAT THE GUB SEEMS WILLING TO PLAY OFF THE PRC AGAINST THE USSR BUT DOES NOT APPEAR TO INVOLVE THE US IN A TRIANGULAR PROCESS. I AGREED THAT THE GUB HAD NOT TRIED TO INVOLVE US AND EXPLAINED THAT OUR OWN MAJOR INTEREST IN BURMA WAS NARCOTICS.

2. COMMENT: THE ABOVE COULD BE READ AS SOVIET INTEREST IN WHAT THEY PERCEIVE TO BE AN OPPORTUNITY TO COUNTER PRC INFLUENCE AND A PROBE TO SEE IF WE WOULD OFFER ANY COMPETITION. JILIAEV, HOWEVER, IS AN UNCOMMONLY CANDID AND OPEN RUSSIAN. CONCEIVABLY HIS QUESTIONS WERE PERSONAL AND NOT UNDER INSTRUCTIONS. THERE WAS NO QUESTION HOWEVER, THAT HE AND HIS GOVERNMENT ARE INTRIGUED BY A PERCEIVED POSSIBILITY TO HURT THE PRC A BIT. IN ANY SUCH EFFORT THE SOVIETS WOULD NOT SUFFER THE BURDEN OF SUPPORTING AN INSURGENCY AGAINST THE GUB (THE BURMESE COMMUNIST PARTY) AS DOES THE PRC.

3. THE PAST YEAR HAS SEEMED TO US TO FEATURE A TURNING TO THE PRC RATHER THAN AWAY. HOWEVER, NE WIN'S LAST TRIP TO CHINA PRO-
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DUCED FEW, IF ANY, RESULTS AND HE HAS A LOW TOLERANCE FOR FRUSTRATION. IT STILL SEEMS HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT THE GUB - EVEN FRUSTRATED - WOULD TURN TO THE USSR. AS THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF MOFA'S POLITICAL DIVISION TOLD ME TODAY, BURMA HAS NO DESIRE TO BECOME INVOLVED WITH A SUPER POWER.

BARTLEY

NOTE BY OC/T: RANGOON 2629 NOT PASSED.

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NNN

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